



pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES (APS) ANNUAL REPORT Fiscal Year 2021-2022

Josh Shapiro, Governor

Dr. Valerie Arkoosh, Secretary

Introduction

The Adult Protective Services (APS) Act (35 P.S. §§ 10210.101—10210.704), also known as Act 70 of 2010, (Act of October 7, 2010, P.L. 484, No. 70) requires the Department of Human Services (Department) to prepare an annual report to the Senate Health and Human Services Committee and the House Health and House Human Services Committees on the program and services performed by APS.

Act 70 provides for a uniform statewide system of protective services for adults with disabilities between 18 years of age and 59 years of age. The Department administers the program to provide the consistent and timely investigation of allegations of abuse, neglect, exploitation, or abandonment of adults with disabilities; the prevention of abuse, neglect, exploitation, or abandonment of adults with disabilities and, when necessary, the provision of services to adults with disabilities who are found to be victims of abuse.

Act 70 affirms an individual’s right to dignity and person-centered values in the provision of protective services. Act 70 states that “adults have the right to receive services in the most integrated settings and in the manner least restrictive of individual liberties.” Furthermore, “adults have the right to make choices, subject to the laws and regulations of this Commonwealth, regarding their lifestyles, relationships, bodies and health, even when those choices present risks to themselves or their property.”

The Department selected a third-party agency, Liberty Healthcare Corporation (Liberty), through a competitive bidding process, to implement the program statewide on April 1, 2015. Liberty remains the current contractor who receives allegations of abuse, neglect, exploitation, or abandonment that are referred by a statewide hotline operated and maintained by the Pennsylvania Department of Aging (PDA) through the Area Agencies on Aging (AAA).

Although the Commonwealth has had protective services systems in place to address the needs of children and older adults, prior to the enactment of Act 70, the Commonwealth lacked the ability to provide for the detection, prevention, reduction and elimination of abuse, neglect, exploitation and abandonment for adults who lack the capacity to protect themselves and are at imminent risk of abuse, neglect, exploitation or abandonment. The APS program serves as the bridge between the child and older adult protective services programs.

Executive Summary

The Department is responsible for the implementation and oversight of Act 70 for adults 18 years of age or older but under 60 years of age, who have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity. Act 70 reinforces the Commonwealth's commitment to provide services necessary to protect the health, safety and well-being of adults who lack the capacity to protect themselves and who are at imminent risk of abuse, neglect, exploitation or abandonment. Act 70 also safeguards the rights of adults while providing for the detection, reduction, correction or elimination of abuse, neglect, exploitation and abandonment. The Department has a responsibility to educate the public as to the availability of services and create an awareness of issues affecting adults to prevent abuse.

The Department works closely with the PDA, Liberty and the AAAs to administer the APS program at the local level. The local AAAs are responsible for the intake of reports of need, while Liberty is responsible for the investigation of allegations and providing protective services to adults. Within the Department's Bureau of Human Services Licensing (BHSL), the Division of Adult Protective Services is responsible for conducting quality assurance reviews and providing technical assistance across the Commonwealth. For more information regarding various programs available for Pennsylvanians, including the law governing the prevention and protection from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and abandonment, please visit the Department's website at [Department of Human Services](#).

Regulations

The Act 70 requires the Department to promulgate rules and regulations, in consultation with adults, their families and advocates and all other departments necessary to implement the act.

The Department commenced 23 meetings with community stakeholders beginning in January 2011 and ending in September 2015. Participants, referred to as the Adult Protective Services Coalition, included advocates for people with physical disabilities, intellectual disabilities and brain injuries; provider associations for in-home care, long-term living and county commissioners; a mental health consumers' association; a planning and advisory group for people with disabilities; a university-based research and advocacy entity; and representatives from Department programs that serve adults with physical or mental impairments. The coalition advised the Department on Act 70 related to adults with disabilities and provided varied and diverse perspectives on how the regulations should be crafted. The Department has incorporated many of the coalition recommendations

into the draft proposed rulemaking.

The Department published the proposed regulations in the *Pennsylvania Bulletin* for public comment on April 22, 2023. 53 Pa.B. 2169 (April 22, 2023). The need for a system of protective services, provided under public auspices, has been well-documented. Such systems have been legislated and regulated across the nation.

The people who will benefit from the regulations include adults in need of protective services, their families and friends and members of the community who are concerned about them. Public and private organizations that provide community services will benefit from the regulations when recipients of their services are at imminent risk. In addition, the regulations ensure that the Department is notified when recipients are reported to need protective services. Such communication builds a network to coordinate services that better serve recipients.

Reporting

There are two types of reporting under APS: voluntary and mandatory. Both types of reporters have legal protection against retaliation, discrimination and civil or criminal prosecution under the law. Under voluntary reporting, any person who has reasonable cause to suspect that an adult with a physical or mental impairment 18 years of age or older but under 60 years of age is a victim of abuse may call the statewide Protective Services Hotline number at (800) 490-8505. Voluntary reporters may choose to remain anonymous.

A mandatory reporter is defined as “an organization or group of people that uses public funds and is paid, in part, to provide care and support to adults in a licensed or unlicensed setting.” A mandatory reporter is required to make an immediate oral report to the Protective Services Hotline at (800) 490-8505, followed up within 48 hours with a written report to Liberty. If the allegation involves sexual abuse, serious injury, serious bodily injury or suspicious death, the mandatory reporters must also immediately make an oral report to local law enforcement and to the Department at (717) 265-7887, followed up within 48 hours with a written report to law enforcement.

The total number of reports of abuse, neglect, exploitation or abandonment received by APS for state fiscal year (SFY) 2021-2022 was 16,694, for an average of 1,391 reports per month. Of the total reports received, 9,169 (55%) were from mandatory reporters. Table 1 outlines the reports received by county while Chart 1 provides a heat map for the counties where the reports were received.

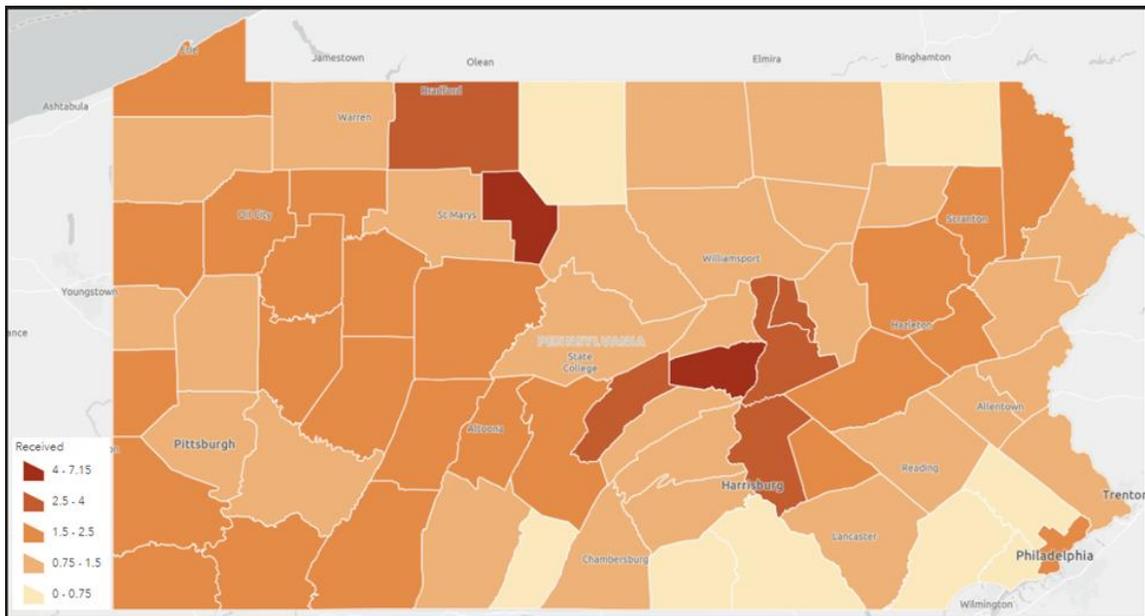
Table 1 – NUMBER OF REPORTS BY COUNTY, SFY 2021-2022

(* **Numbers less than 15 have been suppressed to protect confidentiality of individuals)

COUNTY	TOTAL REPORTS	%	COUNTY	TOTAL REPORTS	%
Adams	71	0.43%	Lawrence	104	0.62%
Allegheny	1,485	8.90%	Lebanon	233	1.40%
Armstrong	107	0.64%	Lehigh	503	3.01%
Beaver	264	1.58%	Luzerne	488	2.92%
Bedford	45	0.27%	Lycoming	160	0.96%
Berks	555	3.32%	McKean	132	0.79%
Blair	214	1.28%	Mercer	195	1.17%
Bradford	72	0.43%	Mifflin	118	0.71%
Bucks	516	3.09%	Monroe	150	0.90%
Butler	190	1.14%	Montgomery	528	3.16%
Cambria	299	1.79%	Montour	52	0.31%
Cameron	19	0.11%	Northampton	290	1.74%
Carbon	104	0.62%	Northumberland	229	1.37%
Centre	130	0.78%	Perry	41	0.25%
Chester	288	1.73%	Philadelphia	2,464	14.76%
Clarion	58	0.35%	Pike	49	0.29%
Clearfield	158	0.95%	Potter	**	**
Clinton	36	0.22%	Schuylkill	221	1.32%
Columbia	71	0.43%	Snyder	287	1.72%
Crawford	111	0.66%	Somerset	104	0.62%
Cumberland	237	1.42%	Sullivan	**	**
Dauphin	692	4.15%	Susquehanna	21	0.13%
Delaware	399	2.39%	Tioga	33	0.20%
Elk	36	0.22%	Union	31	0.19%
Erie	572	3.43%	Venango	89	0.53%

COUNTY	TOTAL REPORTS	%	COUNTY	TOTAL REPORTS	%
Fayette	312	1.87%	Warren	54	0.32%
Forest	**	**	Washington	351	2.10%
Franklin	208	1.25%	Wayne	95	0.57%
Fulton	**	**	Westmoreland	518	3.10%
Greene	70	0.42%	Wyoming	31	0.19%
Huntingdon	70	0.42%	York	323	1.93%
Indiana	145	0.87%	Out of State	**	**
Jefferson	90	0.54%			
Juniata	31	0.19%			
Lackawanna	455	2.73%			
Lancaster	651	3.90%			

Chart 1: HEAT MAP REPORTS BY COUNTY, SFY 2021-2022
 (Rate/1000 based on county population)



Reports of Abuse: Intake, Investigation and Outcome

All reports called into the Protective Services Hotline are classified by Liberty and assigned to one of the following referral categories: Priority, Non-Priority or No Need for Investigation.

Report Categorization	Description	Agency Response Time
Priority	A report placed in this category will require immediate attention because specific details in the report indicate the possibility that the adult reported to need protective services is at imminent risk of death or serious injury or serious bodily injury.	Investigation must be initiated within 24 hours, including a face-to-face with the adult.
Non-Priority	A report is placed in this category when it does not appropriately fall within the priority category and, therefore, does not require immediate attention by the agency.	Investigation must be initiated within 72 hours, including a face-to-face with the adult.
No Need for Investigation	A report is placed in this category when the person reported to be in need of protective services meets either of the following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Has the capacity to perform or obtain, without help, services necessary to maintain physical or mental health; or ➤ Is not at imminent risk or danger to his/her person or property. 	Not Applicable

All reports placed in the No Need for Investigation category are reviewed by a Liberty supervisor and all steps necessary are taken to confirm or reject the categorization. If the Liberty supervisor confirms the screening categorization, Liberty can offer to make appropriate referrals to other entities. The Department concurrently reviews a sample of reports placed in the No Need for Investigation category and if the Department agrees with Liberty’s determination, the case will then be closed. If either the Liberty supervisor or the Department rejects the No Need for Investigation categorization, the report is placed in either the Priority or Non-Priority category and an investigation is initiated within the required timeframes. A report cannot be placed in the No Need for Investigation category if the adult is temporarily relocated to a safe environment and will return to the

original abusive situation or to a new location which has not been determined to be safe.

Of the 16,694 reports received in SFY 2021-2022, 2,223 (13.3%) were classified as Priority, 10,359 (62.1%) were categorized as Non-Priority and 4,112 (24.6%) were classified as No Need for Investigation. Since only Priority and Non-Priority reports are investigated, 12,582 (75.4%) of the total number of reports received were determined appropriate for investigation in SFY 2021-2022.

Chart 2 shows categorizations of reports received during the state fiscal year 2021-2022. For all reports categorized as Priority or Non-Priority, an investigation is conducted to determine if the adult (victim) named in the report is in need of protective services, which is considered a substantiated report, or is not in need of protective services, which is considered an unsubstantiated report.

Chart 2: CATEGORIZATIONS OF REPORTS RECEIVED, SFY 2021-2022

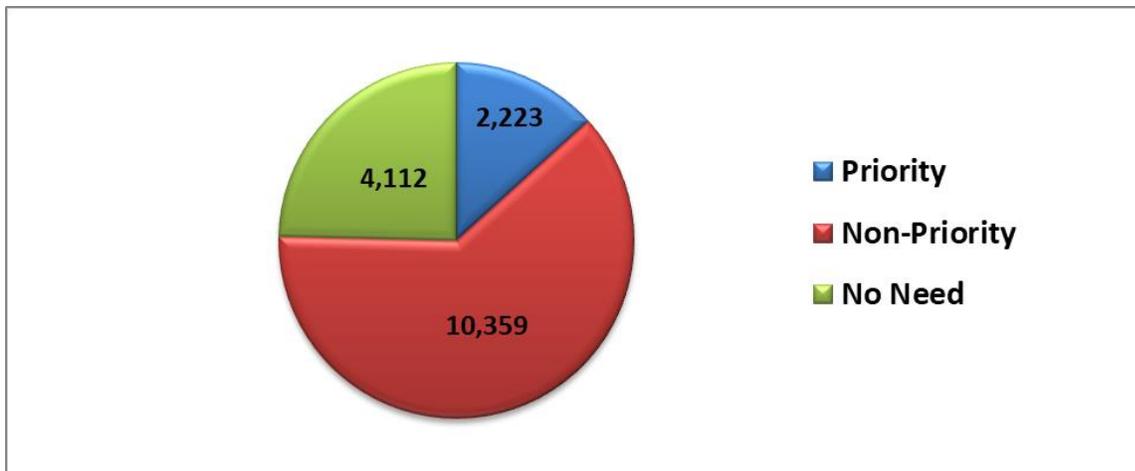


Table 2 outlines the total reports received and investigated by county and Chart 3 provides a heat map of the counties in the Commonwealth where the investigations were conducted.

Table 2 - INVESTIGATIONS BY COUNTY, SFY 2021-2022

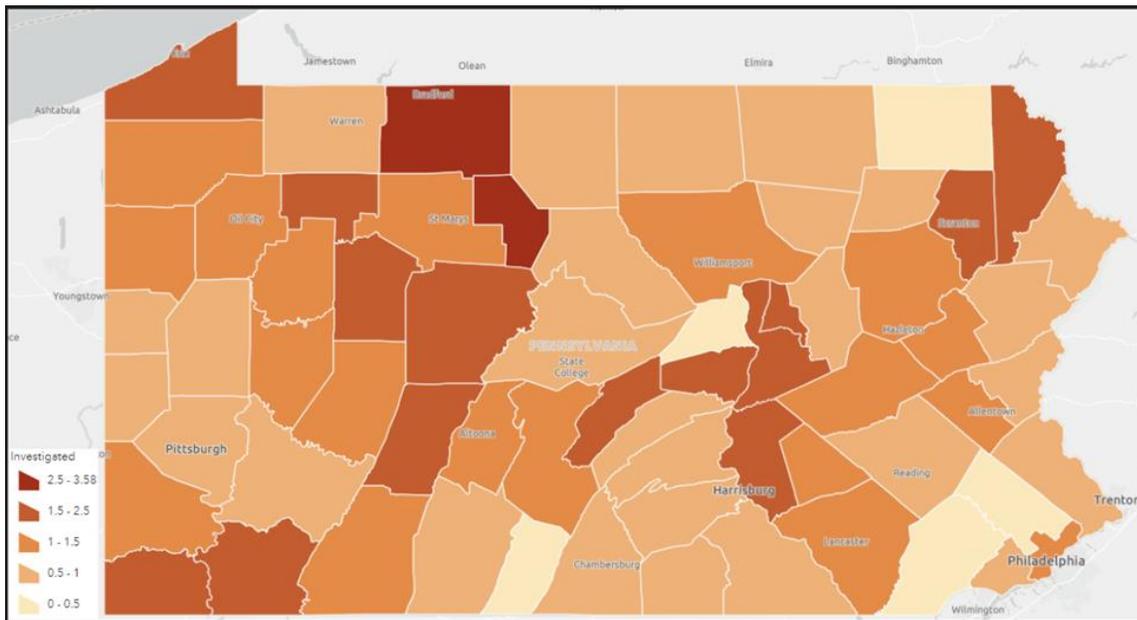
(**Numbers less than 15 have been suppressed to protect confidentiality of individuals)

COUNTY	TOTAL REPORTS	%	COUNTY	TOTAL REPORTS	%
Adams	67	0.53%	Lawrence	85	0.68%
Allegheny	1092	8.68%	Lebanon	189	1.50%

COUNTY	TOTAL REPORTS	%	COUNTY	TOTAL REPORTS	%
Armstrong	75	0.60%	Lehigh	377	3.00%
Beaver	149	1.18%	Luzerne	314	2.50%
Bedford	29	0.23%	Lycoming	134	1.07%
Berks	413	3.28%	McKean	101	0.80%
Blair	176	1.40%	Mercer	135	1.07%
Bradford	55	0.44%	Mifflin	99	0.79%
Bucks	336	2.67%	Monroe	131	1.04%
Butler	132	1.05%	Montgomery	371	2.95%
Cambria	226	1.80%	Montour	41	0.33%
Cameron	16	0.13%	Northampton	232	1.84%
Carbon	85	0.68%	Northumberland	173	1.37%
Centre	107	0.85%	Perry	37	0.29%
Chester	198	1.57%	Philadelphia	1,974	15.69%
Clarion	42	0.33%	Pike	46	0.37%
Clearfield	118	0.94%	Potter	**	**
Clinton	23	0.18%	Schuylkill	181	1.44%
Columbia	64	0.51%	Snyder	65	0.52%
Crawford	88	0.70%	Somerset	79	0.63%
Cumberland	180	1.43%	Sullivan	**	**
Dauphin	544	4.32%	Susquehanna	17	0.14%
Delaware	307	2.44%	Tioga	30	0.24%
Elk	32	0.25%	Union	19	0.15%
Erie	458	3.64%	Venango	74	0.59%
Fayette	259	2.06%	Warren	33	0.26%
Forest	**	**	Washington	295	2.34%
Franklin	152	1.21%	Wayne	84	0.67%
Fulton	**	**	Westmoreland	322	2.56%

COUNTY	TOTAL REPORTS	%	COUNTY	TOTAL REPORTS	%
Greene	54	0.43%	Wyoming	23	0.18%
Huntingdon	56	0.45%	York	292	2.32%
Indiana	107	0.85%	Out of State	**	**
Jefferson	69	0.55%			
Juniata	21	0.17%			
Lackawanna	325	2.58%			
Lancaster	546	4.34%			

Chart 3: HEAT MAP INVESTIGATIONS BY COUNTY, SFY 2021-2022



Out of the 16,694 reports received by the Department for the state fiscal year 2021-2022, 990 (5.9%) involved the following serious allegations:

1. Suspicious Death (not investigated by APS, but law enforcement and the coroner are contacted).
2. Serious Injury: An injury that causes a person severe pain, or significantly impairs a person's physical or mental functioning, either temporarily or permanently.
3. Serious Bodily Injury: An injury that creates a substantial risk of death or causes serious permanent disfigurement or protracted loss or impairment of

the function of a body member or organ.

4. Sexual Abuse: Intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly causing or attempting to cause rape, involuntary deviate sexual intercourse, sexual assault, statutory sexual assault, aggravated indecent assault or incest, as defined by 18 Pa.C.S. (relating to crimes and offenses).

Of the 990 reports labeled as one of the serious allegations identified above, 21 (2.1%) reports were for allegations of suspicious death, three (0.3%) reports alleged serious physical injury, two (0.2%) alleged serious bodily injury and 964 (97.4%) reports alleged sexual abuse.

During an investigation, all potential types of abuse (abuse, neglect, exploitation and abandonment) are explored. An investigation is determined to be substantiated when the adult is found to be in need of protective services at the time of the investigation. Of the 16,694 reports received, 12,582 (75%) were determined appropriate for investigation of which 7,432 (59.1%) of the cases were substantiated.

Chart 4: NUMBER OF REPORTS, INVESTIGATIONS AND SUBSTANTIATED REPORTS

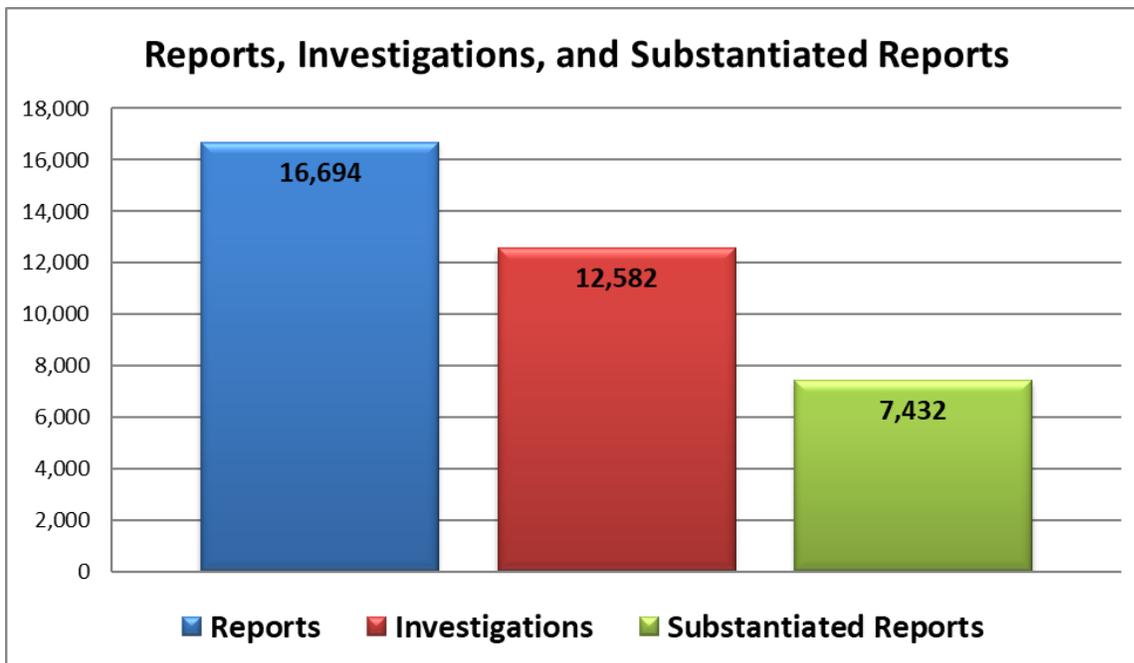


Table 3 displays the types of abuse that were substantiated. The most frequent reports were for neglect (self-neglect 36.5% and caregiver neglect 23.2%) followed by emotional abuse (16.2%).

Table 3 - SUBSTANTIATED ALLEGATIONS FOR INVESTIGATED CASES

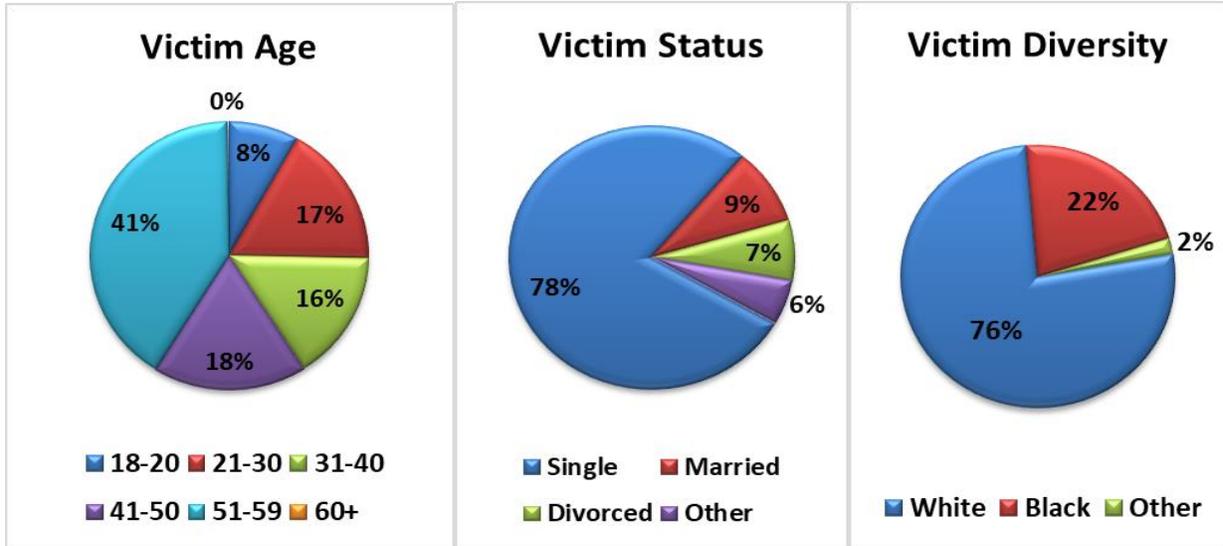
Substantiated Allegation	Count(Percentage)
Self-Neglect (SN)	3,636 (36.5%)
Caregiver Neglect (CN)	2,316 (23.2%)
Emotional Abuse (EA)	1,615 (16.2%)
Physical Abuse (PA)	1,128 (11.3%)
Financial Exploitation (FE)	1,020 (10.2%)
Sexual Abuse (SA)	252 (2.5%)

Values indicated in the table above will not total the same number of substantiated reports due to the possibility of more than one type of abuse (SN, CN, EA, PA, FE, SA) being determined to have occurred within one investigation.

Victim and Alleged Perpetrator Characteristics

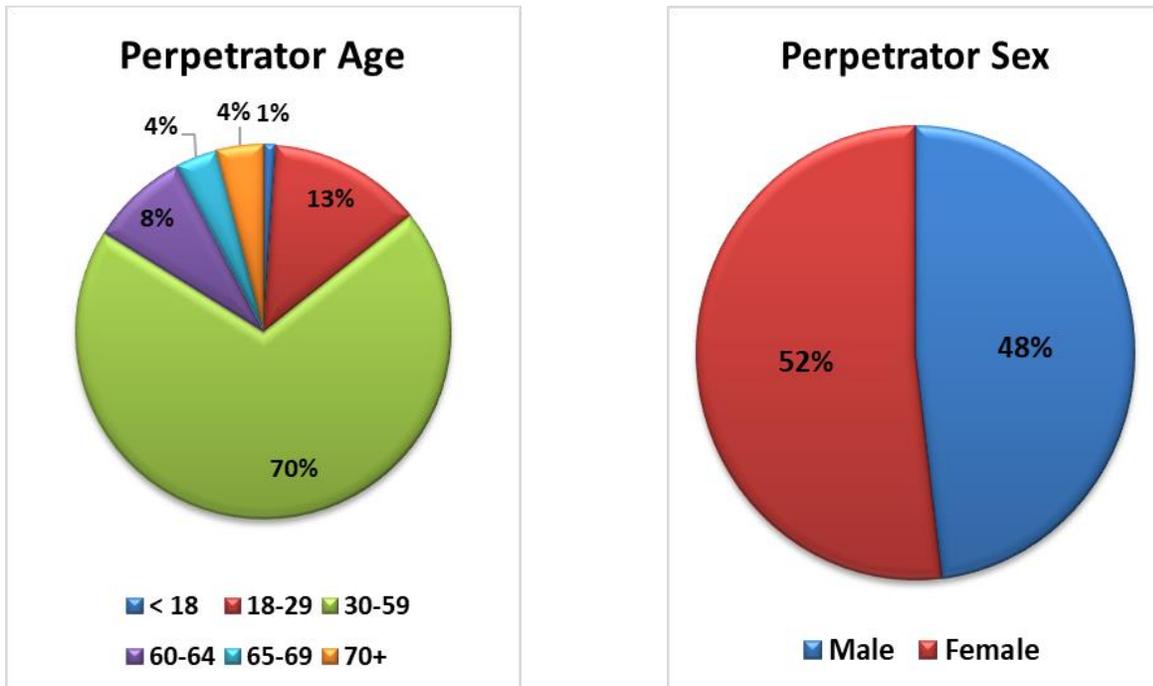
Throughout the course of a protective services investigation, information is gathered concerning the characteristics of an individual (victim) reported to need protective services and the alleged abuser (alleged perpetrator). Tracking this data is important, as it will help inform public outreach efforts.

The age group most often found in need of protective services is between 51 years of age or older but under 60 years of age (41%). The majority are Caucasian (76%) and female (54%). It is important to recognize that many victims are single (78%), reside in their own home or apartment (70%) and live alone or without a roommate (33%).



Other Race includes Asian, Hawaiian, Indian, & Other

Unlike the Older Adult Protective Services Act (OAPSA), Act 70 does not provide for designation of a perpetrator. However, the data that was collected reveals that 70% of alleged perpetrators were between 30 years of age and older but under 60 years of age and 52% were male. The Commonwealth's data is similar to national data, in that the largest group of abusers consists of family members. If a criminal act was committed, law enforcement is contacted as part of the protective services care plan.



Provision of Services

Once a case is determined to be substantiated and services are necessary to reduce or eliminate the identified risk, services are timely offered. After exhausting available steps to provide necessary services through existing agency resources, utilization of other providers and the coordination of public and private entitlements and resources, Liberty may purchase protective services on a time-limited basis.

The Temporary Protective Services Costs (TPSC) during the state fiscal year totaled \$3,505,339.22. Guardianship Fees accounted for the largest cost of TPSC. Other costs included: legal fees/expenses, respite, home health/personal care services, and capacity evaluation and testimony. The following chart details the most frequent services provided to adults:

Chart 5: TEMPORARY PROTECTIVE SERVICE COSTS (TPSC) – TOP 10

Rank	Protective Service	Amount(Percentage)
1	Guardianship Fees	\$1,014,074.20(29%)
2	Legal Fees/Expenses	\$969,694.39(28%)
3	Respite	\$685,478.60(20%)
4	Home Health/Personal Care Services	\$350,445.03(10%)
5	Capacity Evaluation and Testimony	\$185,900.47(5%)
6	Temporary Lodging	\$183,342.44(5%)
7	Cleaning Services	\$48,112.87(1%)
8	Rent	\$19,195.47(1%)
9	Home Modification/Repair	\$12,573.43(0%)
10	Transportation	\$11,338.18(0%)

Court Actions

Liberty may seek court orders to assist in their investigations and ensure the provision of appropriate services. Depending on the circumstances, Liberty may use court orders to access records, to seek protection from abuse orders, to

establish guardianship, or to obtain an involuntary intervention for an adult at risk of death or serious physical harm.

During this state fiscal year, 129 guardianship petitions were filed with the court and 98 investigations had other legal involvement. Out of all investigated reports received for adults, 227 resulted in some type of legal intervention.

Quality Assurance Monitoring

The Department continues to conduct systematic quality assurance monitoring and provide technical assistance to Liberty. Compliance with the statutory requirements is examined and a sample of cases is reviewed to enhance the program. Support is given to Liberty by conducting onsite visits and providing consultation on an as-needed basis. The Department also supports Liberty by providing basic, advanced and annual training opportunities related to protective services. These are offered through the Institute on Protective Services at Temple University in Harrisburg.

Education and Training

During the state fiscal year, the Department provided training on Act 70 and mandatory abuse reporting at over 20 education and outreach events. Through these training opportunities, the Department was able to reach over 1,000 individuals and they were given the opportunity to ask questions regarding Act 70 and mandated reporting. The Department partnered with PDA to offer free full time online access to mandatory reporting for APS and OAPS mandatory reporters. This is accessible on the APS website at [Adult Protective Services \(pa.gov\)](https://www.dhs.gov/act70).

The Department, through a Memorandum of Understanding with PDA, Aging's Institute on Protective Services continues to provide support, training, resources and consultation to Liberty's investigators, criminal investigators and prosecutors, and other local community organizations. These entities work together to uncover, investigate and prosecute crimes against adults and older adults.

Conclusion

The Department continues to provide close oversight of the statewide contractor. This is to ensure all allegations of abuse, neglect, exploitation and abandonment

are investigated thoroughly, and appropriate services are offered to individuals determined to be at risk. Through this close oversight, the Department can identify areas where guidance can be developed and technical assistance provided to the contractor.